

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MADRID 10286 01 OF 02 071808Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
MCT-02 SY-05 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 ACDA-12
HA-05 /103 W
-----002976 071841Z /45

R 071747Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6014
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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LIMITED DDFCIIIL USE SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 10286

BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: POLICE ASSOCIATION-INTERIOR MINISTRY DIALOGUE
DAMPENS TENSIONS

REF: MADRID 10093

1. SUMMARY: THE GOVT'S FIRMNESS, COMBINED WITH ITS
WILLINGNESS TO DIALOGUE, APPEARS TO HAVE COOLED OFF
THE TERRORISM-PRECIPITATED DISPUTE BETWEEN THE POLICE
ASSOCIATION AND THE INTERIOR MINISTRY. BUT THIS
EPISODE IS ONLY A SYMPTOM OF A MUCH DEEPER PROBLEM: THE
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PAGE 02 MADRID 10286 01 OF 02 071808Z

TERRORISM-ENGENDERED DETERIORATION OF DISCIPLINE AND
MORALE AMONG THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES. AND THE CONFLICT
DEMONSTRATES THAT AS THE GOVT ATTEMPTS TO DEAL WITH
THE TERRORISM CHALLENGE, SOME OLD-LINE POLICE ELEMENTS
WILL SIMULTANEOUSLY RESIST REFORMS AND GRUMBLE ABOUT
FUTURE TERRORIST DEPRADATIONS THAT THOSE REFORMS ARE
AIMED AT ELIMINATING. END SUMMARY.

2. THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE POLICE ASSOCIATION AND THE INTERIOR MINISTRY, WHICH RESULTED FROM A CHAIN REACTION ENGENDERED BY THE RECENT ASSASSINATION OF FOUR POLICE-MEN (REFTEL AND PREVIOUS), MAY NOW BE MOVING TOWARD RESOLUTION. THE ASSASSINATIONS HAD PRECIPITATED A POLICE ASSOCIATION COMMUNIQUE CRITICIZING THE GOVT'S HANDLING OF THE PUBLIC ORDER SITUATION, WHICH IN TURN HAD BROUGHT THE QUICK SUSPENSION OF EIGHT ASSOCIATION LEADERS BY THE GOVT AND RUMORS OF A RETALIATORY JOB ACTION BY THE ASSOCIATION. BUT A FOUR-HOUR SEPTEMBER 5 MEETING BETWEEN THE ASSOCIATION'S LEADERSHIP (JUNTA) AND THE INTERIOR MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR GENERAL OF SECURITY (NICOLAS) APPEARS TO HAVE CLEARED THE AIR AND COOLED TEMPER.

3. THE MEETING HAD ORIGINALLY BEEN SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 4, BUT WHEN TWO OF THE EIGHT SUSPENDED OFFICERS (JUNTA PRESIDENT CABRERIZO AND JUNTA MEMBER DEFAUCE) WERE AMONG THE JUNTA MEMBERS WHO ARRIVED FOR THE SESSION, NICOLAS QUICKLY CANCELLED IT. AFTER THIS FALSE START, THE JUNTA MEMBERS RETURNED SEPTEMBER 5, WITHOUT THEIR SANCTIONED COMRADES, AND WERE RECEIVED BY NICOLAS.

--THEY REPORTEDLY ASSURED NICOLAS THEY HAD NO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MADRID 10286 01 OF 02 071808Z

INTENTION OF CALLING ANY JOB ACTION AND EMPHASIZED THAT THEIR CONCERNS WERE PROFESSIONAL -- NOT POLITICAL -- IN NATURE. IN THIS CONTEXT, THEY REQUESTED THAT THE SANCTIONS IMPOSED ON THE EIGHT ASSOCIATION OFFICIALS BE LIFTED. ALTHOUGH THEY REPORTEDLY HAD COLLECTED OVER 1000 SIGNATURES OF SUPPORT FROM POLICEMEN IN MADRID ALONE, THEY DID NOT PRESENT NICOLAS WITH ANY SUCH PETITIONS, IN ORDER TO AVOID "POLITICIZING" OR ESCALATING THE CONFLICT.

--NICOLAS, FOR HIS PART, TOLD THE JUNTA THAT THE MINISTRY WOULD NOT LIFT THE SANCTIONS APPLIED TO THE EIGHT, BUT HE ALSO ASSURED THEM THAT THEY WOULD BE TREATED FAIRLY AND WITH DUE PROCESS.

4. NICOLAS REPORTEDLY ALSO DEMANDED AN EXPLANATION OF ALLEGED STATEMENTS BY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS THAT THEY HAD BUGGED INTERIOR MINISTER MARTIN VILLA'S PHONE, AND IMPLICATIONS THAT TAPES THUS OBTAINED WOULD BE USED TO "BLACKMAIL" MARTIN VILLA INTO DOING WHAT THE ASSOCIATION WANTED. THE JUNTA MEMBERS RESPONDED THAT THEY HAD NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY SUCH ACTIVITY AND THEY

DENIED EVER HAVING SEEN ANY SUCH TAAES. (THE BUGGING CLAIMS HAVE SPARKED QUITE A SENSATION IN THE MADRID PRESS, WHICH THRIVES ON THIS SORT OF WATERGATE-STYLE STORY. THE JUNTA'S DENIAL HAS BY NO MEANS LAID TO REST THIS QUESTION, AND THE INTERIOR MINISTRY REPORTEDLY HAS OPENED AN INVESTIGATION.) AFTER THE SEPTEMBER 5 MEETING, IT WAS REPORTED THAT CABRERIZO AND DEFAUCE HAD RESIGNED THEIR ASSOCIATION POSTS, BUT THEIR STATUS IN THE ASSOCIATION IS FAR FROM CLEAR.

5. COMMENT: THE GOVT'S FIRMNESS, COMBINED WITH ITS WILLINGNESS TO DIALOGUE, APPEARS TO HAVE COOLED TEMPERS

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 02 OF 02 MADRID 10286

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ALL AROUND, AT LEAST FOR NOW. BUT THIS EPISODE IS ONLY A SYMPTOM OF A MUCH DEEPER PROBLEM: THE TERRORISM-ENGENDERED DETERIORATION OF DISCIPLINE AND MORALE AMONG THE PUBLIC ORDER FORCES. AND THE POLICE ASSOCIATION'S COMMUNIQUE, OF WHICH MANY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS APPARENTLY WERE UNAWARE UNTIL IT WAS RELEASED, DEMONSTRATES THAT

THERE IS A SECTOR WITHIN THE POLICE WHICH WILL ATTEMPT TO MANIPULATE THESE DISCIPLINE AND MORALE PROBLEMS FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES. AS THE GOVT WORKS TO INCREASE POLICE EFFECTIVENESS, STRENGTHEN DISCIPLINE, AND SHORE UP MORALE, IT WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE TO MEET HEAD ON THE RESISTANCE OF OLD-LINE POLICE OFFICIALS TO REFORM, AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 MADRID 10286 02 OF 02 071813Z

THESE SAME POLICE OFFICIALS WILL BE AMONG THE FIRST TO GRUMBLE ABOUT FUTURE TERRORIST DEPRADATIONS THAT THOSE REFORMS ARE AIMED AT ELIMINATING. TODMAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLEGATIONS, LABOR STRIKES, POLICE FORCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID10286
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780364-1134
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780994/aaaaczow.tel
Line Count: 185
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c9046956-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MADRID 10093
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1520947
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLICE ASSOCIATION-INTERIOR MINISTRY DIALOGUE DAMPENS TENSIONS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SP
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c9046956-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014